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IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

D. S. Rec^o. 6 April, 1844
BETWEEN

SHAKESPEARE,

THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON,

AND

RICHARD QUYNER,

AN OLD ASSOCIATE,

AT STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

By William Gilmore Diez.



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BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY JORDAN AND COMPANY,
121, Washington Street.

1844.

AN
IMAGINARY CONVERSATION

BETWEEN

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

AND HIS FRIEND,

HENRY WROTHESLY, EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON.

ALSO,



AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION,

BETWEEN THE SAME MR. SHAKESPEARE, AND

MR. RICHARD QUYNER, AN OLD ASSOCIATE OF HIS,

AT STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

By W. G. D.

1844.

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18, Devonshire Street,

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE conversations were published several months ago in a weekly periodical in Boston, but were so surrounded by "fine stories," "thrilling tales," &c., that I have thought it proper to have them printed in this form, as the commencement of a series of similar papers.

It does, perhaps, hardly become the writer of so small a tract as this, to say anything about himself; nevertheless, as it is my desire to make a fair start in this undertaking, I will state this much, for the satisfaction of those who wish to know who it is that claims their attention, that for a little more than two years I was a member of the very respectable University in this place, but that, about a year since, I withdrew from the department of it, with which I was connected, partly on account of ill-health, partly for lack of means, but especially, from a desire to exercise myself in a more congenial sphere.

And now it may be permitted me to say something about the chief topic suggested by these conversations. It has been much debated of late, whether the

Drama is not fast dying out. The most natural answer to this seems to be, that, although it is earnestly to be hoped that a licentious Drama will never be revived, the Drama itself cannot die, until men cease to converse together; for, the dramatic style of writing being the most simple and best calculated to combine instruction with judicious entertainment, every person who finds that way of expressing his thoughts the most convenient to his temper, will adopt it, and will thus do his part towards keeping alive that disposition in all men's minds to have matters of reflection presented to them in the liveliest manner consistent with discretion and decency.

It is, indeed, greatly to be lamented that the Drama should have been so prostituted as to cherish vice rather than encourage virtue; to set forth the wickedness of men in oftentimes so pleasing a manner as to serve rather as an allurement than a warning. But, although the Drama, when abounding in impurity and profaneness, deserves no higher appellation than the Poetry of Hell, yet, when it has thrown off the fetters of sensuality and sin, it may exert a powerful influence in fostering a spirit of true manliness and social virtue, and in promoting an intellectual taste founded upon the truths of Religion. And so it will be; for every person who rightly discerns the signs of the times, who looks about him and sees how the people have invaded the peculiar province of the scholar, and are boldly discussing the highest matters both in Church and in State; how they are becoming less and

less disposed to regard with favor the creations of a cunning fancy, however wild or beautiful they may be, if they have no intimate connexion with the highest themes of human thought, will feel that the Dramatist can have little hope of usefulness, if he does not conform to the intellectual demands of the age. Indeed, it is evident to all persons looking carefully into the future, and interpreting it by the past, that there is fast hastening on a revolution of opinions, bloodless it may be, but beyond precedent terrible. In this revolution the Drama is destined to take her place, not to delight the ear by enchanting fancies, but to sing of Prophets, Kings, and Christian Martyrs, of the early struggles and afflictions of the Church, of its fearful conflicts past and to come, of its final victory over Sin, the Devil, and Roman Apostacy, of its triumphant glory upon earth, and of its ineffable and everlasting excellency in the Paradise of God.

W. G. D.

Cambridge, Jan. 8, 1844.

AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION
BETWEEN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND HIS FRIEND,
THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON.

SHAKESPEARE.

Good-morrow, my lord.

SOUTHAMPTON.

What ! Will Shakespeare, a welcome to you. How do you, and what means that strange twinkle in your right eye ?

SHAKESPEARE.

My lord, for your welcome, I thank you. As to your questions, to the first my reply is, that my health is as sound as I could desire ; and for the second, I must tell your lordship, that I have been writing a play con-

cerning King Henry the Fourth, of glorious memory ; and having occasion to introduce therein a certain portly and facetious knight, by name John Falstaff, I have been moved to mirth so heartily, that maybe, I have not quite recovered from it.

SOUTHAMPTON.

Ah, then you find yourself in just the mood with the man you are representing in a play. Do you feel disposed to weep also, when you are telling of one who has been overwhelmed with misfortune ?

SHAKESPEARE.

Why, my lord, as to that matter, I cannot say that the tears ever slip out of my eyes in such a case, nor do I mean, that in writing about Sir John, I was so mirthfully affected as to laugh outright ; but your lordship must needs think that we play-writers could not have much success, if we did not enter into the characters we are describing, and be affected by what we represent them to say or do, in the same way as we should

be, were the same things really said or done by living persons. The writer of a play, my lord, maintains a perfect calmness of the mind, when engaged upon the most exciting scenes, and he is apt to be the calmest, when describing what is most calculated to disturb the feelings of others ; but, nevertheless, his soul will be full of mirth, when queer ideas are passing through his mind, though no one but a keen observer would detect it in the outward appearance, and he will feel sad, when setting down mournful things in a play, though, to an observer, he would seem to be only a little more sedate than usual. No man in a fit of violent, uncontrollable emotion, could ever compose anything, which would excite similar passion in a reader. When two men are overflowing with boisterous anger, what they say to each other is empty and flat ; it is only when their wrath settles into calmness, that they say bitter things.

SOUTHAMPTON.

What you say, Will, has a semblance of

common sense ; but what have you to do with common sense ? you are a poet.

SHAKESPEARE.

My lord, I did not suppose that you held the vulgar notion that poetical abilities and common sense were perfect antipodes. No, my lord, they are not. The notion perhaps, is supported by the low ideas some men have of common sense, as if indeed, it were nothing but that low cunning, which can always manage to get the best side of a bargain ; but that is not it. It is a quick and keen insight into things, without going through a labyrinth of *ands* and *ifs* and *buts* and *therefores* ; and who possesses this faculty in such perfection as the poet ? the true poet, I mean, not the rhyme-maker. Your man of common sense sees through a matter at a glance, and because he does it so quickly, the undiscerning are apt to call him superficial ; whilst your great reasoner, who pretends to demonstrate everything he says, after puzzling his brain for hours upon the same subject, comes to what he calls a

conclusion, and gets the name of being very profound. It is all a mistake. Your true superficialist is your man, who must go to the depths of a question step by step, on a long ladder of logic, and he is the really profound man, who needs none of these artificial helps, but goes to the bottom at once.

SOUTHAMPTON.

But, Will, you cannot mean that all the logic, which scholars use, is good for nothing, and rather a hinderance than a help to the understanding of difficult subjects ?

SHAKESPEARE.

No, my lord, logic is an excellent thing in its way, an excellent thing. I would not say one word against logic. I only maintain that common sense is not such a despicable thing as some folks hold it to be. All the logic in the world will never teach a man to reason, if he did not know before ; and if he did know before, all the use of logic is to show him when he is wrong.

But I hold that plain common sense is superior to all logic. The orator must have it, for he endeavors to persuade men of common sense : the poet must have it, if he would interest the great mass of the people in his productions ; in short, common sense my lord, is sunlight, and your logic is only candle-light.

SOUTHAMPTON.

Well, a poet will have his own notions about everything, yet you cannot persuade me that an unlearned fellow, whose mind happens to move quickly, will be more likely to hit the truth of a matter, than a strong-minded man, whose brain is well spiced with logic. But to leave this subject; you know, Will, there are many men of wit, who take a fancy to your performances, and in their good judgment think that your writings will afford instruction and amusement to many that will come into the world long after this generation have gone out of it. And yet, you seem altogether careless of your reputation, and after your plays have gone from your hands,

you leave them to be twisted into all manner of shapes by others, who, in their whimsical fancy, think they can improve what you have written, and make it more suitable for critical ears. Besides, if a passage in any of your plays is misunderstood, you have little care to set the matter right; how is this?

SHAKESPEARE.

My lord, it does not enter into the composition of a poet to be over-careful about his composition ; he must even let it go for what it is worth, because he cannot afford to make the corrections, which he himself knows to be necessary. And then, my lord, this correcting a play is hard work ; it is an easier matter to write a new play, than to go very critically over an old one, taking in and putting out, pruning and changing words and sentences. But, as to my being careless of my reputation, it is not so. I know well enough what I am, but because I do not make a bluster, and say aloud to all people, “look ye, here’s a poet,” for-

sooth, some of my short-sighted friends have a notion that I am a stranger concerning my own disposition. I will not say that I am always thinking about myself, but I tell you this for a certain truth, that no man ever lived, who had a good share of native sense, without finding it out sooner or later. His consciousness may not be active at all times, for he must busy his brain about something else than itself; but he will have a sort of passive consciousness of his own power, that restrains him from self-conceit, and at the same time gives him confidence to set about what he knows he can perform.

SOUTHAMPTON.

Well, I do not doubt the correctness of what you affirm concerning yourself, and I suppose no one would ever have thought you were unconscious of your ability, had it not been for that gentle, pliant way you have of accommodating yourself to whomsoever you fall in with, whether of high or low capacity. But to change the subject of our conversation, how is it with you,

Will, about your writing? Can you write at all times equally well, or do you find it sometimes impossible to write anything, and at other times feel yourself so constrained to invention, that you cannot help writing? Some men, you know, say that is all foolishness, this talking about being unable to compose anything, whatever it be, as well at one time, as another, and that it is only laziness which makes some persons so notional about this.

SHAKESPEARE.

My lord, I can conceive of a little wit, who has so little native power, that it makes no difference with him, if he has a work to do which requires mental exertion, when or in what mood of mind he sets about it; for he will be as likely to perform it at one time as well as (that is to say, no worse than) at another. There are some men I know, who even consider themselves endowed with some imagination, who only show that they have the least share of this faculty, by fancying that they can get through with a

piece of writing, as the artisan does, who works by the job, for whose interest it is, that he finish it as soon as possible and have it off his mind.

SOUTHAMPTON.

But how do you explain why it is that the mind should not be equally ready at all times to exert itself? Is not a man's mind under his own control?

SHAKESPEARE.

I will not vouch for giving a sure explanation of this matter; but I know that it is so, and I think I could find reasons enough to satisfy my own mind, albeit they might not be satisfactory to another. In the first place, my lord, you must needs know that in order to the construction of anything right worthy, there must be intellectual harmony: no man can work out of his brain a fine piece of composition, if his faculties are all disturbed by many diverse influences; he must be wholly absorbed in what he is busy about,

or he can accomplish nothing. If there is discord in his soul, he cannot think, talk, or write sensibly. So that the matter rests here, whether this intellectual harmony can be voluntarily produced. I think, my lord, that it cannot always be so produced. For however highly cultured the mind may be, if it be of a highly original cast, it can happen no otherwise than that many times it will be so bent in one direction, that it cannot be brought to bear with its whole power upon a matter which requires a different intellectual mood. To attempt forcing it in such a case, would occasion nothing but discord. And then, my lord, you know, that however it may be with the little wits, who never being able to fasten their whole mind upon a subject, have always some mental effort to spare for anything that comes up before them, it happens with a mind that throws itself wholly into whatever interests it, that it will not only be sooner exhausted, but will require a good deal of rest, and be unable to exert itself with vigor, till it has recovered its energies: Again, my lord, with regard to the poet, for

I suppose, that by your interrogations you meant especially to refer to him, he is the man, who the least of all men, has his own mind under his control. Whether he wish it or not, he cannot prevent his mind from busying itself as it may, with oftentimes wayward notions, about all things that impress it from without. If the poet were, in the common sense of the word, a thinker, it might not be so hard to bring his mind to bear upon a particular subject at any time ; but he is not so much a thinker as a thoughtful man. Philosophers are thinkers, but the poet cannot put himself into an agony of thinking for any body or anything ; his fancies must come tripping along of their own accord, or they are of little worth, and if, when he wants them, they will not come at his call, he has only to wait, till it suits them to appear before him.

SOUTHAMPTON.

I find this an excellent opportunity to get all out of you that I can concerning yourself, and it may be, that knowing how it is

with your constitution, and what your mental habits and your feelings are, I may at least come to thinking myself a poet, and perhaps to being one. At least, if it is a poetical characteristic to be sometimes disinclined to set about any labor, I think I may claim even now to be no mean poet. But, Will, what do you find to do in the winter months, when even the mind partakes somewhat of the character of the season? Does your fancy move as quickly now as in the summer-time?

SHAKESPEARE.

My lord, the winter is the time to read, and muse, and not to write. Then the fancy does not play nimbly, but seems like the ground, covered up and hardened, with its elasticity lost, and its genial warmth concealed. But when spring comes the mind feels its gladdening influence, the fancy throws off her fetters, and plumes her wings, and rejoices with all nature at the coming of the genial season. Then shoot up again what had lain covered and seemingly dead,

and the whole soul is refreshed, quickened and awakened. Bright and beautiful thoughts arise in the mind which keep it ever active, and eager to discern new and wonderful things in the world, and to commune more intensely with its own inspirations.

SOUTHAMPTON.

You ought certainly to know how the seasons affect the disposition of a poet, and since I can only conjecture what they may be, I have only to take your words as true, without gainsaying. But it is a wonder to me, how a poet's soul should be so full of beautiful images, and yet be unable to pour them forth at any time. Spirits do not easily congeal, and I wonder how so volatile a thing as a poet's mind should ever be in a dumpish humor.

SHAKESPEARE.

There are some poets, my lord, whose heads seem to be overrunning with poetical ideas, and they give them out in such abund-

ance, that a clown might think their sources were unexhaustible ; but such are the poets who have an exuberant fancy with very little discretion. They will portray a matter to you, whether of history or purely imaginative, colored with all rich tints, and you will confess, at the first seeing it, that it looks passably agreeable, but you cannot muster courage to go over it a second time, it will then seem so clumsily and awkwardly done. But the man who has a strong imagination, does not have constantly on hand a supply of metaphors and figures of speech to be dealt out unsparingly when occasion requires. It is not the number of images and poetical ideas, which are put into a poem, that make it worthy of praise ; it is in the grouping them together, that they may have the greatest effect, that the true skill of the poet is shown. Imagination is not the faculty which enables a man to pile together heaps of pretty sayings without order or method ; and whoever thinks, that because he has at his tongue's end all sorts of metaphors, he is therefore a poet, is in that matter greatly mistaken.

SOUTHAMPTON.

Why, Will, you are as strange a fellow as it was ever my luck to behold. I expressed my astonishment at something which appeared paradoxical to me, and, instead of resolving my doubts, you go about a great way to talk to me of metaphors and figures of speech and all that. Will you please return to your starting-place, and explain the question to me ?

SHAKESPEARE.

It is indeed a grievous thing to me, that in what I have observed to your lordship, I have not kept myself to the subject of discourse ; but you know that it is not according to the poet's disposition to attend closely to one thing ; for, when an opposite fancy strikes him, he must follow it, though it lead ever so far away. And so it is that, — but I beg your lordship's pardon, I can tell by the expression of your face, that you think I am about digressing again. Well, let us come back. What is it, my lord, we were talking of ?

SOUTHAMPTON.

Why this; you were satisfying me on the point of the season's influence upon the poetical spirit, and my surprise is, that so quick-moving a machine as a poet's mind, should ever be stopped by the chilliness of the air, or any such thing.

SHAKESPEARE.

And here your lordship may see that I was not digressing, when I spoke of the difference between a strong imagination and an exuberant fancy. There lies the reason of the thing, and your lordship may examine it at your leisure. If you wish the metaphysics of the question, you must keep wishing, for no farther can I satisfy you, than to give you my word, that the imagination is apt to be clogged when the air is cold, and that then the poet is well nigh as stupid as a plodding mortal. And now, I bethink me of a pressing matter which concerns me, and I must leave you, with many thanks for your honest plainness, and

your kind regard for a play-writer like me.
Good-day my lord.

SOUTHAMPTON.

Good-day, Will ; and many thanks to you
in return for the gratification you have af-
forded me. Good-day.

AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION

BETWEEN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND RICHARD QUYNER, AN OLD ASSOCIATE OF HIS, AT STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

R. Q.

Good morning, Mr. Shakespeare ; I am very glad to see you. You have just arrived from London, I understand ?

SHAKESPEARE.

Yes, Mr. Quyner, I have been living, you know, in London, for some years, without making many visits to my native town ; and when I do so, it always affords me pleasure to take my old companions by the hand, — how goes the world with you ?

R. Q.

Oh, Mr. Shakespeare, the world goes round, and carries me with it in as good condition as I could desire, though somewhat uncomfortably pent up in this town. I would rather be in the great city, where there is more animation, more stir.

SHAKESPEARE.

Your wish is very natural, but still, those who are crowded along in the thoroughfares of a great city, are desirous also of getting far away into the retirement of the country. So it is with us all, we should be well content with our lot, were it only a little different from what it is.

R. Q.

You speak the truth, I cannot gainsay it. Do you know, Mr. Shakspeare, what wonderful stories we have had circulated here about you lately. They say that you have been writing plays, which have taken so

well with the people, both high and low, that even noblemen have desired your acquaintance ; and some go so far as to say, that our good queen Elizabeth has bestowed upon you some especial marks of her approbation. Why, Mr. Shakespeare, we never thought you had a wonderful wit. You recollect how many times we have played together, how we have angled in that river yonder, and you had no more sense than the rest of us, — at least you did not show it. And now, that my old play-fellow, Will Shakespeare, writes plays, and has the majesty, nobility, and gentry of the land to see them acted ! Dear me, I wonder if I could'nt write a play.

SHAKESPEARE.

I cannot deny that the reports you speak of have some foundation. It is true, that some of the plays I have written have been applauded beyond my expectation, by those whose good opinion is well deserving of regard ; and our worthy queen has expressed towards me many encomiums, which

though as yet, in my estimation of myself, hardly deserved, I hope may be so in my future endeavors. As to my setting about the writing of plays for a livelihood, I knew not what else to do, and had hardly a thought of what I was engaged in, till all at once I found myself the writer of a play altogether my own, after having helped to make some others, which had been offered for representation, passable. So having thus begun, there was no other way of proceeding for me, than to keep on in the same course. Somewhat to my surprise it was, to be sure, that I found the people liked my plays, and that some came even from the court to see them. But I could not help their coming, nor, sooth to say, did I desire to do so ; I was made glad by seeing them, and if my humble performances afforded them equal gratification, I would not have them deprived of it.

R. Q.

Well, now I have it from your own lips, that these reports concerning you are not

false, will you tell me what subjects you discourse upon in your plays ?

SHAKESPEARE.

I do not confine myself to any single subject, but endeavor to embrace as many as possible, so that I may present an agreeable variety. Sometimes I take up an historical matter, as illustrated in the lives of our sovereigns, — that keeps up the spirit of patriotism, as well as affords delight to the mind. In an old story, too, I often meet with something that can be wrought into a play. Whenever I hit upon anything of that nature, I begin to brood over it, half asleep, it may be, and perhaps striving to free myself from contemplating it, that I may seek a subject better suited to me ; but I find myself drawn back, and so compelled to have nothing but that one thing before my mind, that the result is very likely to be a play in five acts, with very little of the original story in it, but filled in with other matter as my invention leads me.

R. Q.

A very excellent plan, Mr. Shakespeare ; and if ever I am in London on one of your play-nights, I will go to see whatever you have to be acted, and when I shall see the lords clapping their hands, the ladies waving their handkerchiefs, and all the common sort of folks breaking forth into raptures at a fine scene, I do not know that I can refrain from telling all those about me that I used to be a playfellow of yours. But, Mr. Shakespeare, I hope you do not have many love stories in your plays. I never could abide such things, because those who write them are so apt to tell romantic stories that mean little, while of the love of brothers and sisters towards each other, and of parental and of filial affection, they hardly discourse at all.

SHAKESPEARE.

It is true, indeed, that there is very little in what you term love-stories, to call forth admiration. I profess not to err in that

matter. I have introduced lovers into many of my plays, but I have endeavored to make them talk as sensibly as possible. It is my aim to represent things naturally, and so I have need sometimes to represent lovers, since there are such beings in the world, and it would be strange in me, that pretend to look over the various characters and interests of mankind, to leave them out altogether. At the same time, I have no desire to make it appear that men have nothing to do in the world besides murmuring and sighing and talking foolishly by reason of their intense love,— that would be equally unnatural. I agree with you also, that we seldom see portrayed in works of fancy the every-day affections of life. One reason of it I think may be, that in the view of those who write these works, there is nothing particularly striking in domestic, household feelings, and so they have need to go about to seek for some romanti-
cal instances of affection and attachment, which they may make more interesting and agreeable than they could a common story. Partly they are in the right, and partly in

the wrong. In the right, because it were a foolish laying out of skill to attempt adorning that which has in itself no remarkable interest; and in the wrong, because there are in what we may see around us at all times abundant materials for the fancy to work upon.

R. Q.

True, Mr. Shakespeare.—May I ask you whether you regard the representation of a play as likely to have any other effect upon the spectators than to excite mere emotions of pleasure? You know there are those who say that, by seeing acted out before us an exceedingly virtuous or vicious character, we are led instinctively to imitate the one, and to take warning by the other; but it has always appeared to me a very doubtful matter, whether men are really made better by seeing a play, although it may represent the finest attributes of humanity; not because, considered by itself, there may not be in it much that is noble and beautiful, but because men are

apt to regard such things as mere matters of taste, and not as means of improvement.

SHAKESPEARE.

Your question involves many considerations, which it would be impossible for me at this time fully to enter into. I may say this much, however,— that no man can reasonably expect that a piece of composition, which displays more imagination than anything else, should have a great and lasting moral effect. It may excite emotions of the purest kind, but since it relies more for its effect upon the intellect than upon the heart, its strictly moral influence is not apt to be so great or so permanent, as the production of a mind far less imaginative, perhaps, but having more persuasive power. The office of the imagination is to please. It is not to discover anything which shall add to the stock of knowledge,— its office is to please. A man may even be pained by the consciousness of having more imagination than other men, because when he would speak in earnest, men are so apt to

disregard the purport of what he says, in their enjoyment of the fancies, which he cannot help throwing around it ; so that, let him do his best, he can only please.

R. Q.

I cannot say *amen* to all that, Mr. Shakespeare. It seems to me that the fancy may frequently be so brought to bear upon an interesting subject, and one that is closely related to the good of men, that the best feelings of the heart may be wrought upon, and that, not transiently, but permanently.

SHAKESPEARE.

That is true, and is not inconsistent with my own notions upon the matter, though I have too broadly, perhaps, laid down my argument. I know that men may be actuated by various manifestations of the imaginative spirit, whether in the majesty of eloquence or in the gentle power of harmony, to the performance of noble deeds ; yet the effect, even here, is, to my under-

standing, chiefly intellectual, or at least as much intellectual as moral. The feelings may, indeed, be reached, but their action will be so blended with that of the intellect, that one can hardly determine, whether any particular manifestation of the influence exerted comes from the head or the heart. Thus you may see a man enjoy intensely a work of imagination, and yet go away, and in social life show himself completely unmindful of the lesson the writer chiefly endeavored to inculcate. I have often tried in my plays to give a passing thrust at some fashionable folly, or to make some virtue, that was lightly esteemed, of greater moment ; and yet I have found that the very persons who the most eagerly attended to the play were often those, who warded off with the greatest skill the arrows I aimed at them, and such as them. So I often lament this my ill-success, and have now settled it with my disposition, that all I can do in the world is to please the fancy of men.

R. Q.

Mr. Shakespeare, I cannot hear you talk

so without feeling that you greatly wrong yourself. You may not immediately see the effects of what you write, but be assured that whatever is earnestly said, however set off with the colors of fancy, will be felt at one time or another. You may not even in your life see the practical use men may make of your writings,—what maxims of wisdom they may collect from them, and what beautiful and grand sentiments they may find therein; but when years have passed over your grave, men will begin to regard more carefully what you have said, and not having the times and circumstances of your plays directly before them, will think more of the profound thoughts, that, as it were, fled to the bye-corners of your plays, to get away from the bustling scenes displayed in them, and which modestly concealed themselves till careful hands sought them out.

SHAKESPEARE.

You say many encouraging things of me, and, although you over-estimate my per-

formances, yet I trust that you may be so far correct in your notions, that men of after times will not look back upon me as upon a man who lived in vain, and who could do nothing but please. Good-bye.

R. Q.

Stop, Mr. Shakespeare, I have not yet done with you, you must not go away so quickly, I have hardly spoken with you a minute.

SHAKESPEARE.

I am not disposed to set little by the kindness of my friends,—surely I would not leave you yet, if you wish to hold more converse with me. But since you have called me back again, I should like to get some knowledge from you of matters here; we were talking so much about plays and all that, that I forgot to ask you many things I had on my mind. How fares Sir Thomas now-a-days?

R. Q.

Oh ! Sir Thomas ? He is somewhat poorly now. He lives there in his old seat yet, but he does not seem to enjoy life overmuch. He carries himself rather haughtily towards the people here, and, if I may be so bold, is as ready as ever to punish the least trespass ; however, you know, we must have patience with such men, — he keeps up the credit of the village, and we must make due allowance for his whimsies.

SHAKESPEARE.

Well, how is it with the good old schoolmaster, Thomas Jenkins, — is he living still ? I meant to have called upon him, but my engagements are so pressing, that I doubt whether I shall have the opportunity.

R. Q.

Oh yes, and for so old a man as he is, he is very well. I wish you could hear him talk about you sometimes. He heard of

your success in London ; and whenever he meets with any of your old acquaintances, he is always sure to speak some praise of you. I met him the other day in the street, and was just passing him with a *good morning*, *Mr. Jenkins*, when he stopped all at once, and said, “*Mr. Quyner*, when did you see *Mr. William Shakespeare* last ?” I told him that several years had gone by, since I had seen your face. Then he burst out with, “*That was a clever lad, Mr. Quyner*, I knew he would come to something. When he was under my care, he was always so quiet and industrious, and so kind and good-natured to everybody.” And that is the way he always speaks about you. And,—but *Mr. Shakespeare*, just see that old man walking down towards us so slow and feebly — I do believe it is father Jenkins himself.

SHAKESPEARE.

It surely is he.

R. Q.

Now, *Mr. Shakespeare*, let ’s go up to

meet him, and then we three will go down
to my house, and have a pleasant chit-chat
about old times.

SHAKESPEARE.

Yes, I 'll go.

1844.

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